

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2023

The Honorable Christine E. Wormuth
Secretary of the Army
Department of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

The Honorable Douglas R. Bush
Assistant Secretary of the Army
Department of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Secretary Wormuth and Assistant Secretary Bush,

I write to express my deep concern regarding the Department of the Army's role in the manufacturing of commercial ammunition that has been used in some of the United States's deadliest mass shootings.¹ Recent reporting by the *New York Times* and *Bloomberg* has indicated that ammunition produced at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant has circulated widely in the civilian marketplace.² While these sales are lawful, reports indicate that ammunitions produced at the plant have played a role in major crimes and significant mass shootings around the country. In fact, casings from ammunition rounds produced at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant have been found at mass shootings including in 2012 in Aurora, CO; 2017 in Las Vegas, NV and Sutherland Springs, TX; 2018 in Parkland, FL and Pittsburg, PA; 2022 in Buffalo, NY and Uvalde, TX.³ Reports further indicate that ammunition produced at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant has been specifically sought after by nefarious actors for being "the best barrier penetration ammo" available.

While public-private partnerships may be appropriate to maintain a robust defense industrial base, direct or indirect federal subsidies may be artificially increasing the availability of ammunition in the civilian marketplace and contributing to serious violence by private citizens. On October 1, 2020, Winchester Ammunition, a subsidiary of Olin Corporation, assumed full management and operational control of the Department of the Army's Lake City Army Ammunition Plant for production of military ammunition, cartridges, and casings.⁴ At the time of the contract's awarding, Winchester Ammunition stated that the contract was expected to increase its annual revenue by \$450 million to \$550 million—a 450% increase.⁵

Meanwhile, the Army has reportedly invested \$860 million in taxpayer funds over the past two decades into the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant's maintenance, repairs, and expansion. Yet, while the Plant does produce ammunition for military use on a need basis, commercial output more than doubles its military level of production. As one contractor operating the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in 2018 stated, "[a]ll Lake City ammunition, whether for military or commercial use, is manufactured in the same facility, utilizing the same processes and quality-control standards."⁶ This raises serious questions about the role the Department of the

¹ *Army Ammunition Plant Is Tied to Mass Shootings Across the U.S.*, New York Times (Nov. 11, 2023) (online at www.nytimes.com/2023/11/11/us/army-ammunition-factory-shootings.html).

The Pentagon's Deadly Secret: It Makes Money From Bullets Used in Mass Shootings, Bloomberg (Nov. 16, 2023) (Online at <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2023-us-made-gun-exports-lake-city-ammo/#xj4y7vzkg>).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Annual Report – 2022 FY (Feb. 23, 2023) (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-22-000015.pdf>).

⁵ Annual Report – 2019 FY (Feb. 25, 2020) (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-20-000072.pdf>).

⁶ Orbital ATK and Lake City Army Ammunition Plant: A Proud Heritage of Service

<https://news.northropgrumman.com/news/features/orbital-atk-and-lake-city-army-ammunition-plant-a-proud-heritage-of-service>

Army has played in subsidizing the firearms industry and the level of oversight that the Department has exercised in supporting the plant's operations.

Please provide the following documents and information no later than December 17th:

1. Contract initiated in 2020 with Olin Winchester for full management and operational control of the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant;
2. Detailed breakdown of the \$860 million in Department of the Army investments for the capital needs and improvements of the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant and any planned future expenditures;
3. All reports from Olin Winchester to the Department of the Army on commercial production and sales from the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant;
4. All policies relating to the Department of the Army approving or disapproving manufacturing lines at the plant;
5. The ratio of commercial production output to military production output, by year, for the last ten years.
6. A list of any other contracts between the Department of the Army and ammunition manufacturers who serve the civilian market.
7. Any cost assessment documents which show the total benefit Lake City provides to the US government, with any relevant supporting data
8. Results of any cost benefit analysis conducted by the Department of the Army regarding the need for an affordable and reliable military ammunition supply and the potential for subsidizing deadly commercial ammunition sales.

Thank you for your service to our nation, and for your timely response to this urgent oversight request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Garcia', written over a horizontal line.

Robert Garcia
Member of Congress